

Technical, Vocational Education and Training Strategies for Coping with Economic Challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria

by

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Abstract

The study is a descriptive survey research design conducted to investigate on the Technical, Vocational Education and Training strategies for coping with economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. THREE research questions guided the study while three null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the study was 45 subjects purposely sampled from the TVET public universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population comprised of 15 TVET technologists and 30 TVET lecturers from University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Enugu State University of science and technology. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire constructed by the researchers. Three Experts in the Department of Industrial Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka validated the instrument. A pilot study was conducted and Cronbach Alpha reliability indices of the instrument yielded 0.89 using SPSS version 22. This showed that the instrument is reliable and appropriate for administration. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was employed to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that Enugu State is faced with serious economic challenges and that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on the economic challenges that face the State. The study recommended among other things that the government and philanthropists should help in controlling economic challenges that face Enugu State, Nigeria by investing in human capital and social development and giving support to private sectors especially the SME.

Keywords: Technical, Vocational Education and Training, economic challenges.

Introduction

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is at the intersection of education and the world of work, and is expected to facilitate the insertion of young people and adults into the labour market, and their career progression. It plays a critical role in national development (James & Makiko, 2021). It is an education and training given to the learners to acquire skills, knowledge and attitude needed in the world of work and necessary for employment in ones' chosen occupation. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a vital role in human resource development for enhancing industrial productivity and improving the quality of life. According to Chukwumerije (2011), Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the most effective tool for the society to develop its members' potential to respond to the present and future economic challenges of the society.

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is learning for work, citizenship and sustainable future which are ideal for solving economic challenges. It is an education meant to impart knowledge and skills for increased efficiency in the world of work, sustainable livelihoods, personal empowerment and socio-economic development, which enhances proper adjustment in knowledge economies and rapidly changing work environment with the view of tackling economic challenges facing humanity (Okorafor & Nnajiifo, 2015).

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is also the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to stimulate sustainable national development, enhance employment, improve the quality of life, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social vices due to joblessness and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy (Adekunle, 2019). In order to realize the full potentials of Technical, Vocational

Education and Training (TVET) in Enugu State, Nigeria and make a tool for coping with economic challenges in the state, well thought out Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy has to be in place as blue print. Policy is defined as the set of basic principles and associated guidelines, formulated and enforced by the governing body of an organization, to direct and limit its actions in pursuit of long-term goal of confronting the economic challenges in the state (Okorafor&Nnajiifo, 2017).

Many policies have evolved with respect to reforming TVET towards addressing the socio-economic challenges in Nigeria. In 2015, UNESCO adopted a strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to support and to equip youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and as well help to tackle economic challenges. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) strategy identified three priority areas: fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship, promoting equity and gender equality, and facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies all aim at tackling economic challenges against sustainable development. Three strategic priorities are proposed: (1) Skills for individuals to learn work and live (2) Skills for economies to transition towards sustainable development (3) Skills for inclusive and resilient societies. These three strategic priorities are the tools that could help in confronting the threat of economic challenges. Enugu State is facing serious economic challenges that are treating her growth, prospects and stability. Economic challenges have a significant impact on the well-being of citizens in Enugu state. The economy growth is below the population growth rate. To overcome these economic challenges and achieve growth, Enugu state needs to implement a comprehensive and coherent set of TVET

policies and strategies that could address the economic challenges facing the state.

There is threat of economic challenges in Enugu State. Nigeria, Africa's largest economy is facing a number of economic challenges that threaten its growth prospects and stability. An economic challenge could be an obstacle or difficulty faced by a country's economy that negatively impacts its growth, development and stability. It is a problem confronting the economy that is concerned with the production of goods and services to satisfy the unlimited wants of the economy through the utilization of scarce resources. It is a difficult choice that results from resource scarcity. It makes the future of a nation uncertain and affects the national planning greatly in all facets. It could act like a thunderbolt to national sustainable development and cause untold hardship to the citizens. It is a serious enemy to the national wellbeing of people. According to Brain (2019), economic challenge is the fundamental challenge facing the societies which is how to satisfy unlimited wants and needs with the limited resources. Its fundamental cause is the scarcity of resources. Resources are inadequate compared to the human demand and the economy cannot produce all that people want. Human wants are unlimited and can never be fully satisfied and at the same time differ in priorities. The main causes of economic challenges and problems are unlimited numbers human wants, limited resources and the alternative use of resources (Callan & Thomas, 2007).

According to Schiller (2010), economic challenges include foundational errors in mainstream economics, understanding complexity, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration to improve decision support and policy advice in the socio-economic sciences. It is risk situations in the realm of national security, arising from conflicts, contradictions, and threats that necessitate urgent responses.

Statement of the Problem

The economy of Enugu State is facing a number of economic challenges that threaten its growth and sustainable development. The unemployment rate is high. There is high inflation rate on every good and services. Insecurity, political tension, conflict and poverty are threatening the well-being of the people in a higher dimension. With all these economic challenges facing the state, it then becomes crucial to examine the technical vocational education and training (TVET) strategies for coping with the economic challenges among the people. Hence, the problem of this study is to find out how technical and vocational education and training strategies could help to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the TVET strategies for coping with economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determines the:

1. Economic challenges facing Enugu State Nigeria.
2. Dangers of economic challenges on Enugu State, Nigeria.
3. Strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. What are the economic challenges facing Enugu State Nigeria?
2. What are the dangers of economic challenges on Enugu State, Nigeria?
3. What are the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of TVET
2. technologists and lecturers on the types economic challenges facing Enugu State, Nigeria.

3. A significant difference does not exist between the mean responses of TVET technologist and lecturers on the dangers of economic challenges Enugu State, Nigeria.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The design adopted in this study is survey research design. The area of the study was Enugu State of Nigeria. The study was conducted at the two public Universities in Enugu State that runs Technical Vocational Education and Training. The population for the study was 45 respondents. The population comprised of 15 technologists and 30 TVET lecturers and form University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Enugu State University of science and technology, Enugu.

The population for the study was manageable. There was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was thirty-eight (38) structured items questionnaire constructed by the researchers using a four-point responses scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The instrument was face validated by three experts, from the Department of Industrial Technical Education, University of Nigeria, their corrections and suggestions were used to produce the final instrument. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study of 20 students was conducted at Nnamdi Azikwai University, Awka in Anambra State. A Cranach Alpha reliability index of the instrument yielded 0.89 using SPSS version 22. This showed that the instrument was reliable and appropriate for administration. The instrument was administered by hand with the aid of two research assistants. All the 45-questionnaire administered to the respondents were returned. This represents a return rate of 100%. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level

of significance. To take decision on the agreed items, true limit of numbers was assigned to response options as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) 4.00 -3.50, Agree (A): 3.49-2.50, Disagree (D):2.49-1.50 and Strongly Disagree (SA) 1.49 -1.00. Therefore, any item with mean value of 2.50 and above was accepted as agreed,while any item below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed.

The t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The

t-test was considered suitable because according to Uzoagulu (2011) the t-test is more appropriate when the sample size (n) is small. The t-critical (t-table) value for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses was ± 1.96 .

Results

Data for the study were presented and analyzed based on the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study. The details are contained in the tables 1-6.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Economic Challenges facing Enugu State, Nigeria

Item Statement	Technologist		Lecturers		Overall		Decision
	X1	SD1	X2	SD2	X3	SD3	
1 High unemployment rate	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	Agree
2 High inflation rate	3.87	0.40	3.80	0.33	3.84	0.37	Agree
3 Underdevelopment	3.96	0.21	3.87	0.40	3.92	0.31	Agree
4 Spatial inequality	3.90	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.85	0.33	Agree
5 Foreign exchange rate volatility	3.87	0.40	3.75	0.36	3.81	0.38	Agree
6 Low productivity	3.84	0.42	3.75	0.36	3.80	0.39	Agree
7 Weak governance	3.70	0.30	3.65	0.33	3.70	0.32	Agree
8 Poor infrastructure	3.75	0.36	3.80	0.33	3.78	0.35	Agree
9 High rate of tertiary education	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	Agree
10 Insecurity	3.84	0.42	3.80	0.33	3.82	0.38	Agree
11 Political tension	3.80	0.33	3.75	0.36	3.78	0.35	Agree
12 Conflict and poverty	3.80	0.33	3.75	0.36	3.77	0.35	Agree
Cluster mean	3.83	0.35	3.78	0.34	3.81	0.35	Agree

Note: X1 = Mean of TVET technologist, X2 = Mean of TVET lecturers, SD1 = Standard deviation of TVET technologists, SD2= Standard deviation of TVET lecturers, X3=Average mean, SD3 = Average standard deviation

The data in Table 1 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of responses on the respondents on the economic challenges facing Enugu State, Nigeria. The data shows that the respondents strongly agreed to great extent that all the items identified are the economic challenges facing Enugu State. The mean values that range

from 3.65to 3.96 for the two groups of the respondents were above the bench mark of 2.50 and the cluster means of 3.83 and 3.78 respectively for TVET technologist and lecturers were also above the benchmark of 2.50. The closeness of the standard deviation scores of the respondents indicates less variability that exists among the respondents.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Dangers of Economic Challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Item Statement	Technologist		Lecturers		Overall		Decision
	X1	SD1	X2	SD2	X3	SD3	
13 Substandard housing and living	3.70	0.30	3.65	0.33	3.70	0.32	Agree
14 Hunger and ill-health	3.75	0.36	3.80	0.33	3.78	0.35	Agree
15 Homelessness	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	Agree
16 Inadequate childcare	3.84	0.42	3.80	0.33	3.82	0.38	Agree
17 Poor access to good health facilities	3.80	0.33	3.75	0.36	3.78	0.35	Agree
18 Insecurity and unsafe neighborhoods	3.80	0.33	3.75	0.36	3.77	0.35	Agree
19 Poverty & lack of social mobility	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	Agree
20 Emotional problems	3.75	0.36	3.70	0.30	3.73	0.33	Agree
21 Developmental delays on children	3.96	0.21	3.87	0.40	3.92	0.31	Agree
22 Poor mental health	3.90	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.85	0.33	Agree
23 Disruption in family dynamics	3.87	0.40	3.75	0.36	3.81	0.38	Agree
24 Social vices	3.75	0.36	3.70	0.30	3.73	0.33	Agree

25	Under-resourced school & lack of access to quality education	3.70	0.30	3.65	0.33	3.68	0.32	Agree
Cluster mean		3.80	0.31	3.76	0.33	0.78	0.32	Agree

Note: X1 = Mean of TVET technologist, X2 = Mean of TVET lecturers, SD1 = Standard deviation of TVET technologists, SD2 = Standard deviation of TVET lecturers, X3 = Average mean, SD3 = Average standard deviation

The data in Table 2 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of responses of the respondents on the dangers of economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. The data showed that the respondents strongly agreed that all the items identified are the dangers of economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. The mean values that range from 3.65 to 3.96 for

the two groups of the respondents were above the bench mark of 2.50 and the cluster means of 3.80 and 3.76 respectively for TVET technologists and lecturers were also above the benchmark of 2.50. The closeness of the standard deviation scores of the respondents indicates less variability that exists among the respondents.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Strategies to Tackle Economic Challenges in Enugu State

	Item Statement	Technologist		Lecturers		Overall		Decision
		X1	SD1	X3	SD2	X3	SD2	
26	Adopting a pragmatic and consistent monetary policy	3.75	0.36	3.70	0.30	3.73	0.33	Agree
27	Unify exchange rate window	3.87	0.40	3.80	0.33	3.84	0.37	Agree
28	Enhancing revenue mobilization	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	Agree
29	Rationalizing government spending	3.90	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.85	0.33	Agree
30	Increase government revenue base	3.87	0.40	3.75	0.36	3.81	0.38	Agree
31	Structural transformation	3.84	0.42	3.75	0.36	3.80	0.39	Agree
32	Economic diversification	3.70	0.30	3.65	0.33	3.70	0.32	Agree
33	Development of value chain & clusters	3.75	0.36	3.80	0.33	3.78	0.35	Agree
34	Improving business, the environment	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	Agree
35	Investing in human capital and social development	3.84	0.42	3.80	0.33	3.82	0.38	Agree
36	Enhancing social safety nets and providing interventions for the vulnerable groups	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	3.80	0.33	Agree
37	Enhancing linkage between oil and non-oil sectors	3.87	0.40	3.80	0.33	3.84	0.37	Agree
38	Government support to private sectors especially the SMEs	3.75	0.36	3.70	0.30	3.73	0.33	Agree
Cluster mean		3.81	0.36	3.77	0.33	3.80	0.35	Agree

Note: X1 = Mean of TVET technologist, X2 = Mean of TVET lecturers, SD1 = Standard deviation of TVET technologists, SD2 = Standard deviation of TVET lecturers, X3 = Average mean, SD3 = Average standard deviation

The data in Table 3 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of responses of the respondents on the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. The data showed that the respondents strongly agreed that all the items identified are the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. The mean values that range from

3.65 to 3.90 for the two groups of the respondents were above the bench mark of 2.50 and the cluster means of 3.81 and 3.77 respectively for TVET technologists and lecturers were also above the benchmark of 2.50. The closeness of the standard deviation scores of the respondents indicates less variability that exists among the respondents.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on economic challenges facing Enugu State, Nigeria

Respondents	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Technologists	15	3.83	0.35	43	0.46	±1.96	NS
Lecturers	30	3.78	0.34				

Note: N = Number of respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, t-cal = t-test calculated, t-crit =t-critical value and NS = Not significant

The data in Table 4 presents t-test analysis of the mean responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on economic challenges facing Enugu State, Nigeria. The data indicated that at 0.05 level of significant, t-calculated of 0.46 is less than t-

critical which is ±1.96. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on economic challenges facing Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 5: t-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of TVET technologist and lecturers on the dangers of economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Respondents	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Technologists	15	3.80	0.31	43	0.31	±1.96	NS
Lecturers	30	3.76	0.33				

Note:
N =
Num
ber
of

respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, t-cal = t-test calculated, t-crit =t-critical value and NS = Not significant

The data in Table 5 presents t-test analysis of the mean responses of TVET technologist and lecturers on the dangers of economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. The data indicated that at 0.05 level of significant t-calculated of 0.31 is less than

t-critical which is ±1.96. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of TVET technologist and lecturers on the dangers of economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 6: t-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria

Respondents	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Technologists	15	3.81	0.36	43	0.36	±1.96	NS
Lecturers	30	3.77	0.33				

Note: N = Number of respondents, X = Mean, SD = standard deviation, t-cal = t-test calculated, t-crit =t-critical value and NS = Not significant

The data in Table 6 presents-t-test analysis of the mean responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. The data indicated that at 0.05 level of significant, t-calculated of 0.36 is less than t-critical which is ±1.96. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of TVET

technologists and lecturers on the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that high unemployment rate, high inflation rate, underdevelopment, spatial inequality, foreign exchange rate volatility, low productivity, weak governance, poor infrastructure, high

rate of tertiary education, insecurity, political tension and conflict and poverty are the economic challenges facing Enugu State, Nigeria. The respondents strongly agreed to all the identified items. This was observed from the overall mean values which were above the bench mark. These findings are in agreement with the study of Okoye and Arimonu(2016) which revealed that Nigeria people are faced with economic challenges which affects their wellbeing.

The finding also revealed that substandard housing and living, hunger and ill-health, homelessness, inadequate childcare, poor access to good health facilities, insecurity and unsafe neighborhoods, poverty and lack of social mobility, emotional problems, developmental delays on children, poor mental health, disruption in family dynamics, social vices and under-resourced school and lack of access to quality education are the dangers of economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. The respondents agreed to all the identified items to great extent. This was observed from the overall mean (x) values which indicated agreed because the mean values were above the bench mark of 2.50. This finding is in agreement with the view of Schiller (2010) that the economy of most nations is faced with serious economic challenge.

The finding showed that adopting a pragmatic and consistent monetary policy, unify exchange rate window, enhancing revenue mobilization, rationalizing government spending, increase government revenue base, structural transformation], economic diversification, development of value chain and clusters, improving business the environment, investing in human capital and social development, enhancing social safety nets and providing interventions for the vulnerable groups, enhancing linkage between oil and non-oil sectors and government support to private sectors especially the SMEs are the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. These findings are in agreement with James and Makiko (2021) that there

could be solutions to an economic challenge of any nation in this 21st century.

The closeness of the responses as shown by the entire standard deviation (SD) indicates homogeneity in their responses. Testing of the three hypotheses revealed that there was no significance difference between the mean responses of TVET technologists and lecturers on the economic challenges facing Enugu State, dangers of economic challenges on Enugu State and the strategies to tackle economic challenges in Enugu State

Conclusion

The study was set out to determine the TVET strategies for coping with economic challenges in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State economy faces a number of economic challenges that require urgent and comprehensive action. In conclusion, the respondents unanimously agreed that there are economic challenges facing Enugu State and these challenges have negative impacts and effects on the citizens. The economy continues to operate well below its potential, but nothing prevents us from beginning now to develop a credible plan for meeting our long-run fiscal challenges. However, the state has the potential and opportunities to overcome these challenges and achieve sustainable development and growth if the government and philanthropists could come together to employ the strategies to tackle economic challenges as outline in this study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

The government and philanthropists should help in tackling economic challenges that face Enugu State by investing in human capital and social development and giving support to private sectors especially the SMEs.

The government should enhance social safety nets and provision of interventions for the vulnerable groups.

There should be rationalizing of government spending.

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